

2 Kings 19 (What to do in a Trial) – Thursday, May 19th, 2016

- Before we dive into this chapter, I think it would be good if we revisit the backstory, as it were, which brings us up to this point.
- The king of Assyria has sent his officials to come against Jerusalem threatening Israel by creating fear so they'll give into him.
- After the officials blaspheme God, they tear their clothes and cover themselves with sackcloth as they go to tell King Hezekiah.

2 Kings 19:1(NKJV) — 1 And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

- Here we're told King Hezekiah responds in two ways upon hearing the bad news of the king of Assyria's threats against him.
- First he responds by tearing his clothes and covering himself with sackcloth then, secondly he goes into the house of the Lord.
- In so doing this good king is going to rise from the pages of scripture and provide for us an example of what to do in a fiery trial.

- We have the first two responses when in a fiery trial here in verse one, the first of which is to see the trial for what it really is.
- When King Hezekiah hears of the official's threats and blasphemy, his first reaction was that of taking the trial very seriously.
- Sadly, many Christians, when in a trial underestimate the seriousness with which the enemy will try and get us to doubt God.

- The second response we can learn from Hezekiah is that he goes into the house of the Lord. In other words, he goes to church.
- Again, it's sad that many Christians, when in a trial, will do just the opposite and isolate themselves by not staying in fellowship.
- To do so is to play right into the hands of the enemy, such that, this is exactly what the devil hopes to accomplish in our lives.

Ephesians 6:10–17 (NIV) — 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

2 Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 3 And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day is a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth. 4 It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.' "

- Here we have 2 more responses when we're in a trial, the first of which is to seek the Lord and the second is to ask for prayer.
- Notice in verse three where he likens their strength to a mother who is too weak to birth their child, such that both could die.
- It's for this reason that he seeks the Lord in what we're told was their "day of trouble," particularly as it relates to the blasphemy.

Adam Clarke of this wrote - "The impudent blasphemy of this speech is without parallel. Hezekiah treated it as he ought: it was not properly against him, but against the LORD; therefore he refers the matter to Jehovah himself, who punishes this blasphemy in the most signal manner."

5 So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6 And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 7 Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." ' "

- Here we find our fifth response when in a trial, and it's that of going to the Word of God, as Hezekiah does by going to Isaiah.
- I find it interesting that God's Word on the matter is that they're not to be afraid of the words, which they had heard spoken.
- This because, God's Word is always the final word, and such is the case here where hearing God's Word turns fear into faith.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) — 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

8 Then the Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. 9 And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "Look, he has come out to make war with you." So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 "Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." 11 Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? 12 Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? 13 Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?' "

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that the king of Assyria continues to attack the king of Israel.
- Herein lies our sixth response when in a trial, which is that of expecting the enemy to attack again in that he will never give up.
- This is one of the most important principles when it comes to spiritual battles; namely, that the devil is merciless and relentless.

14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15 Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16 Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. 17 Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, 18 and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. 19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone."

- What Hezekiah does here provides us with our 6th and 7th response when in a trial which is to continually commit it to the Lord.
- More specifically, to spread it before the Lord, cast it upon the Lord, and to see the trial and circumstances in light of the Lord.
- Often times we do the opposite, such that, we see God through the lens of our circumstances instead of the other way around.

1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV) — 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Psalms 37:5–6 (NKJV) — 5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday.

Proverbs 16:3–5 (NKJV) — 3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established. 4 The LORD has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.

- I would suggest the evidence of not seeing our trying circumstances in light of our God, will be that we don't commit it to Him.
- Conversely, when we do see our big problems through the lens of our bigger God, the result will be that we will commit it to Him.
- Then, when we do, the peace of God, which surpasses human understanding will keep our hearts and minds at peace in Him.

Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV) — 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

F.B. Meyer said it best this way, "When therefore letters come to you, anonymous or otherwise, full of bitter reproach; when unkind and malignant stories are set on foot with respect to you; when all hope from man has perished, then take your complaint—the letter, the article, the speech, the rumor—and lay it before God. Let your requests be known unto Him."

The story is told of an old preacher who received a letter with no sender or return address on the envelope. When he opened it, he saw just a single piece of paper with only one word written on it: "Fool!" So, he decided to take it into the pulpit the next Sunday, and said: "I received an unusual letter this week. Never before have I received a letter where the writer signed his name, but forgot to write anything else!"

20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.'

- This is perhaps amongst the most powerful and profound verses in all the Bible as it relates to the Lord answering our prayers.
- Notice how that Isaiah tells Hezekiah, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'because you have prayed to me, ...I have heard.'"
- Herein lies our ninth response when in a trial, which is that of believing by faith that the Lord hears and answers our prayers.

- Actually, from verse twenty-one, through to the rest of the chapter, the narrative turns a corner with the answer to his prayer.
- However, before we finish the chapter, I think it would be good to recap the nine responses when in a trial from this chapter.
- My hope is to provide a template of sorts with which to refer to when we find ourselves in spiritual battle and in those fiery trials.

WHAT TO DO IN A TRIAL

1. Accurately discern the seriousness of the trial
2. Stay in fellowship with God's people
3. Seek the Lord in prayer
4. Ask for prayer
5. Go to God's Word
6. Expect Satan to attack again
7. Continually commit it to the Lord
8. See your circumstances in light of your God
9. Believe that the Lord will answer your prayer

Truth be known, God will answer our prayer according to His will and His goodness, as He is obligated to deliver us for His name sake, F.B. Meyer of this said, "He is our Judge, Lawgiver, and King, and is therefore bound by the most solemn obligation to save us, or his name will be tarnished."

21 This is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him: 'The virgin, the daughter of Zion, Has despised you, laughed you to scorn; The daughter of Jerusalem Has shaken her head behind your back! 22 'Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice, And lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel. 23 By your messengers you have reproached the Lord, And said: "By the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, To the limits of Lebanon; I will cut down its tall cedars And its choice cypress trees; I will enter the extremity of its borders, To its fruitful forest. 24 I have dug and drunk strange water, And with the soles of my feet I have dried up All the brooks of defense." 25 'Did you not hear long ago How I made it, From ancient times that I formed it? Now I have brought it to pass, That you should be For crushing fortified cities into heaps of ruins. 26 Therefore their inhabitants had little power; They were dismayed and confounded; They were as the grass of the field And the green herb, As the grass on the housetops And grain blighted before it is grown. 27 'But I know your dwelling place, Your going out and your coming in, And your rage against Me. 28 Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back By the way which you came. 29 'This shall be a sign to you: You shall eat this year such as grows of itself, And in the second year what springs from the same; Also in the third year sow and reap, Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. 30 And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah Shall again take root downward, And bear fruit upward. 31 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, And those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.' 32 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: 'He shall not come into this city, Nor shoot an arrow there, Nor come before it with shield, Nor build a siege mound against it. 33 By the way that he came, By the same shall he return; And he shall not come into this city,' Says the LORD. 34 'For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.' " 35 And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. 37 Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

- One final thought here before we bring the study to an end, and it has to do with what are known as the Sennacherib Annals.
- You can actually see the Annals of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, also known as the "Taylor Prism," in the British Museum.
- The reason I point this out is because it speaks to the rank pride of this Assyrian King, as displayed with his boastful account.

What follows is an actual quote from Sennacherib's Annals, "I attacked Hezekiah of Judah who had not subjected himself to me, and took forty-six fortresses, forts and small cities. I carried away captive 200,150 people, big and small, both male and female, a multitude of horses, young bulls, asses, camels, and oxen. Hezekiah himself I locked up in Jerusalem like a bird in its cage. I put up banks against the city. I separated his cities whose inhabitants I had taken prisoners from his realm and gave them to Mitiniti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Zilbel, king of Gaza and thus diminished his country. And I added another tax to the one imposed on him earlier."